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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

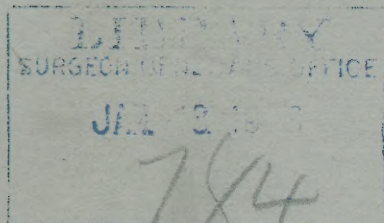
GEORGE ENGELMANN, M.D.,

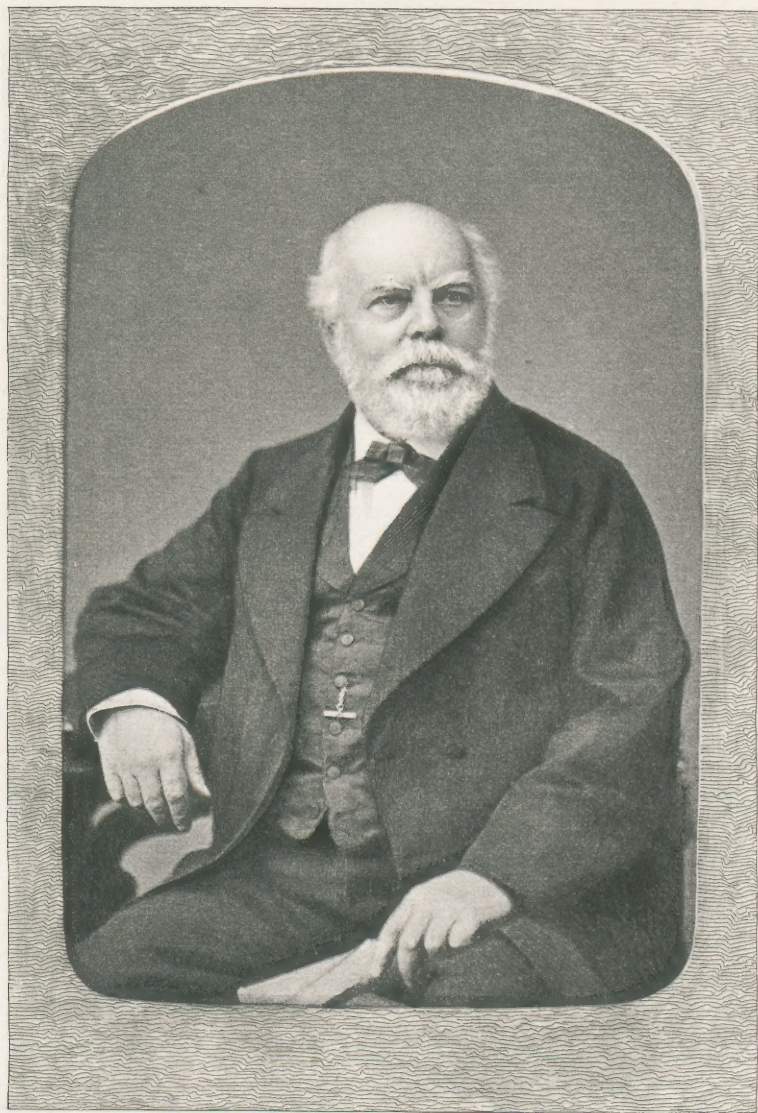
1809-1884.

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J. Engelmann

LIFE SKETCH OF
GEORGE ENGELMANN, M.D.,

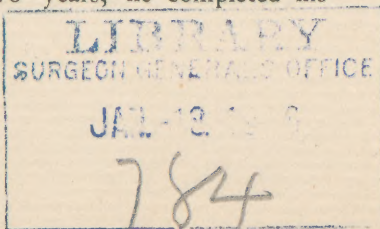
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI.

DR. GEORGE ENGELMANN was born in the old city of Frankfort-on-the-Main, February 2, 1809, son of Julius Bernhardt Engelmann, whose forefathers had been ministers for the Reformed Church at Bacharach-on-the-Rhine, and of Julie Antoinnette, only daughter of Antoinnette André May, descendant from an old Huguenot family.

The education of George's earlier years was guided directly by his parents, and his studies were thus prosecuted at Frankfort until the completion of his eighteenth year, when, assisted by a scholarship founded by the "Reformed Congregation of Frankfort," he entered the University of Heidelberg in 1827.

The opportunities and stimulus for study afforded by this great university were eagerly improved, and they were happily enhanced by congenial association with fellow-students, such as Karl Schimper and Alexander Braun. With the latter, especially, an intimate friendship and correspondence was preserved unbroken until the death of Braun, Professor of Botany, in Berlin, in 1877.

In 1828 young Engelmann, with many of his fellow-students, was obliged to leave Heidelberg for participation in a political demonstration. This brought him to Berlin, remaining there two years, he completed his



medical studies at Würzburg, where he took his degree in 1831, and in 1881 — the fiftieth anniversary of his doctorate — that ancient university honored the aging scientist with its jubilee diploma for eminence in medicine, surgery, and obstetrics.

Soon after graduating he went to Paris, and remained there during the Spring and Summer of 1832, a most interesting period after the July revolution, the downfall of Charles X. and the coronation of Louis Philip; there, with Braun, and Alexander Agassiz, another life-long friend, they led a glorious life in scientific union, in spite of the cholera then raging in the great metropolis. Engelmann's close observation of the new disease proved of inestimable value during the cholera years of 1848-49 in St. Louis, Missouri.

At the close of his studies in Paris, full of plans for his settlement in life, and wishing to visit America, he accepted a proposition from his uncles to become their agent for the purchase of lands in the United States. This he did, practiced in Illinois, made scientific excursions into the wilds of Arkansas and Louisiana, and, having completed his business engagements, established himself in the practice of medicine in St. Louis, Missouri, in the Autumn of 1835. At that time St. Louis was little more than a frontier trading post, but Dr. Engelmann had strong faith in its future greatness, and he happily lived to see it become one of the chief cities of the nation.

Notwithstanding such an humble beginning, before four years were passed he had laid the foundation for a remarkably successful medical practice, and had earned the means of making a visit to his old home.

The object of that journey was to claim the hand of

his cousin, Dorothea Horstmann, who had been the sharer of his earlier studies, as well as the stimulant to the utmost exertion in his struggle for success. The hope of union with her had been his solace during all his hardships in the new world. To her also his home coming was the end of a long and anxious waiting, and they were married at Kreuznach June 11, 1840. This marriage was a most congenial one, and the sustaining and elevating influence of this true woman was exerted with marked effect upon the life and labors of Dr. Engelmann.

Upon his return to St. Louis with his young wife Dr. Engelmann resumed his practice with renewed energy. In his early years he was prominent as a surgeon, and always as an obstetrician, being the first to use the obstetric forceps in that region west of the Mississippi River. The confidence he inspired in his clientele was such that as he grew older he could take long vacations and resume his practice almost at will, but give it up he never would. It was always difficult for him to refuse medical aid to those who sought it, and even up to the last year of his life there were old friends to whom he was the only acceptable medical adviser, and whose appeal for aid he could not refuse.

Although Dr. Engelmann never lost an iota of his inborn love and veneration for his fatherland, he was thoroughly American in all his feelings. He always took great pride in St. Louis, the home of his adoption, especially in its scientific and educational interests, and was liberal and active in their aid.

Dr. Engelmann was an authority in Botany, writer of many botanical works, and member of over thirty scientific societies in this and foreign countries. He

was the founder and organizer of the St. Louis Academy of Science, and its first President, for which office he was re-elected sixteen times, his last election having taken place only a month before his death.

For nearly forty years after Dr. Engelmann established himself in St. Louis, his life was unusually prosperous and free from the serious ills which fall to the lot of most men. His scientific compeers honored him, his patients gave him their unlimited confidence, his fellow-citizens recognized his sterling worth, his health was robust, and, above all, his domestic relations were supremely happy.

But the great grief of Dr. Engelmann's life came upon him in the death of his faithful wife, which occurred on January 29, 1879. His grief was, if possible, intensified by the fact that their only son, George J. Engelmann, was then believed to be dying from the effects of blood poisoning by virus, with which the young surgeon became infected during an operation in his special field of labor.

Dr. Engelmann died in St. Louis, Missouri, February 4, 1884, in the seventy-sixth year of his age. His last resting place is in the central part of the beautiful grounds of Bellefontaine Cemetery, surrounded by specimens of several of the Rocky Mountain conifers, the study of which was one of his chief pleasures.

[The foregoing sketch is mainly taken from "Memoir of George Engelmann, 1809-1884," by Charles A. White, published in Volume IV., Biographical Memoirs, National Academy of Sciences, 1896. THE AUTHOR.]

